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46 • The GAZETTE, Montreal, Wed., Dec. 3, 1975

War Years falls flat

CBC has three remarkable women

Radio&TV by Joan Irwin

Tonight at 8:30 p.m., audiences across the country will have an opportunity to meet three of Canada's most celebrated performers as CBC-TV presents Three Women — contralto Maureen Forrester, folksinger Sylvia Tyson, and Quebec's vibrant Pauline Julien.

It's 90 minutes of music and conversation — a fine blend of lovely sounds and the warmly shared experiences of three remarkable women whose music has given pleasure to millions both inside and outside Canada.

The three very distinctive singers perform separately and, on two brief occasions, together.

Music, conversation

Forrester sings lieder by Schubert, Brahms and Mahler. Tyson performs her own Sleep On My Shoulder, Whatever Became of Me, and Virginia — as well as the Lennon-McCartney Blackbird. Julien does La Moitié du Monde est une Femme, Mommy, La Danse à Saint-Dilon, Le Plus Beau Voyage, and the beautiful L'Ame à la Tendresse, joined in the first and the last by her two co-stars.

In addition to the music and conversations, you'll see Tyson recording her CBC radio series Touch the Earth, Forrester teaching a voice class in Toronto, and Julien being interviewed in Montreal by filmmaker Michel Tremblay and journalist Jean-V. Dufresne.

There are also clips from earlier CBC and NFB performances by all three, including Tyson in her first and last dramatic role for CBC-TV.

The concert segments were done before an audience in Toronto's Bathurst St. United Church amid banks of greenery, flickering candles, and the beautifully effective lighting of Hon Karle.

Three Women was produced for the Musicamera series by David Acomba and Sharon Keogh. It's a thoroughly satisfying show both visually and vocally. I commend it to your attention.

Six War Years

CBC-TV has staged two Barry Broadfoot adaptations — last season's Ten Lost Years and Sunday night's Six War Years.

It's curious that the spare, even bleak, production of the Depression story worked so well on television, while the more elaborate, TV-oriented adaptation of the Second World War recollections never got off the ground.

The Sunday night show was artificial from start to finish, difficult to relate to, and therefore unsuccessful as an evocation of the period. Unlike the informal, free-style interpretation of Ten Lost Years which achieved a deeply personal impact, Sunday night's production came across as contrived and unconvincing.

The characters in both plays appeared to be reliving the period, but they spoke of it in the past tense. In the Depression story, done without costumes or sets, it worked. In the more formal war story produced with all the frills — including film footage of combat scenes — the effect was destroyed.

Weak continuity

In both adaptations each performer played several roles. In Ten Lost Years that lent a quality of universality, in Six War Years it destroyed continuity and involvement with the characters.

The comparisons between the two productions are important because they demonstrate the unpredictability of dramatic forms on television.

CBC drama chief John Hirsch is encouraging experimentation, exploring new forms, searching out new sources of TV drama. It's the only way to revitalize television drama, but there's no guarantee of success with each attempt because there's no way to know what will work until it's been tried.

There are bound to be failures along the way, but it's encouraging to see CBC-TV drama branching out at last.

The most we can expect at this stage is more success than failure — not a bad deal in these unpredictable times.

Photo, Harry Richards

Trumpeter Freddie Hubbard, at In Concert

'Lazy' Hubbard show sparkles

By NIGHTHAWK for The Gazette

Trumpeter Freddie Hubbard says he's "happy." He even says "things are so beautiful and laid back in L.A. that I'm getting lazy."

Don't believe a word of it. When Hubbard gets "lazy," it only means he's got the energy of four people — instead of six.

So, if your batteries are a little low, Dr. Concert is the place to go this week. The music is so packed with color, rhythm and challenging sounds that it sparkles.

The present group, which is nearly the same as the one on the album Liquid Love, has been on the road for some time. Besides the leader, on trumpet and flugelhorn, Carl Randall is on tenor sax and flute; George Cables is on assorted keyboards; Henry Franklin, bass; Carl Harvell, drums; and Sa Davis on Congas and percussion.

The four tunes of the opening set flashed some very different colors. The group opened with Hubbard's Put It In The Pocket which drives along with a very melodic and percussive sound.

The volume was much too high during Cables very interesting first solo, but he turned it down at the first chance he got. He is an amazing pianist, and he gets so wrapped up in his accenting that he occasionally stands up at the keyboards.

The second tune, also a Hubbard original, First Light, set the mood with waves of sensitive ensemble work. It blossomed with the delightfully outrageous coloring of percussion work and ended on a long fingerhorn excursion. Hubbard exhibited such beautiful control of his horn that he played a chorus of whispers and unleashed a storm of fitraves.

Gorgeous

The next tune was a gorgeous rendition of Stevie Wonder's Black Maybe — a very slow blues with some fine solos, particularly from Carl Randall on flute, Cables on piano and Hubbard.

When I reluctantly left the room, the group was ending a funky Hubbard tune. Blessings Now, during which Sa Davis, the conga player took the house by storm and caused some very lively audience reaction.

Pollen: Musical paint-by-numbers

By JUAN RODRIGUEZ for The Gazette

Pollen, the brand new Quebecois rock group that opened a week at the Eveche Club last night, have known triumph very early in their career.

The Quebec City quartet recently played before 2,000 aficionados at that citadel of local pop, the Cinema Cinement, and the slogan on their poster heralds great things: "From sounds, colors, images, and enchanted music."

Very evidently these young people look like they feel "enchanted", as they wander about an array of instruments, with the accent on spanking new synthesizers and keyboards. They sway to the fairy-tale musical pastiche they've managed to compose all by themselves, they bob their heads and smile and weave a little if the going gets really semi-live.

They must be really out there — up, up and away, in cosmic meditation. They must be — because otherwise they might be embarrassed at the barely rudimentary level of their musical technique.

They sound as if they've been listening to FM radio here on earth. They sound like they've listened to Keith Emerson, Mike Oldfield's Tubular Bells and Chick Corea, because they attempt to "color" their music with the same kind of cute electronic phraseology. But oh how they are slow! They grind along in a never ending assortment of jazz-rock and "experimental" cliches, displaying a musicianship that, unbelievably and unbearably, seems not very far from the instruction manual stage.

The way they limply strum guitars, doodle on vibraphone, and press little buttons and switches on synthesizers, Pollen is to music what painting-by-the-numbers is to art.

So 'enchanted' are they that Pollen cannot see the necessity of going beyond running up and down the scales, or fixing themselves upon a riff and repeating it ad nauseum.

Rubin wins entry visa

Jerry Rubin, former clown prince of the American youth movement, entered Montreal last evening for two-and-a-half days of lectures and interviews.

Rubin, once a prominent American radical, was cleared for entry into Canada yesterday morning at an interview at the Canadian consulate in New York city.

Rubin had originally been scheduled to speak at McGill yesterday afternoon. Because of the delay in approving his entry into the country, his first speech took place last evening before nearly 500 people at McGill.

Today, Rubin is slated to give a lecture at 3 p.m. at room 110 in Concordia University's Hall Building downtown. On Thursday, he is to give a noon lecture at Concordia's Loyola campus.

On the airwaves

8:03 p.m. (CBC-FM) Ideas. The 1975 Massey Lectures — Limits to Science. Tonight: The Energy Riddle, and A Dialogue with Starvation.

9:00 p.m. (CBC-AM) Concern. Night People. Cab drivers, bakers, telephone operators, disk jockeys, policemen, hospital workers, explain what life in the daytime is like when you don't sleep all night.

10:30 p.m. (CBC-AM) Country Roads. Tiny Hite and his group are featured tonight.

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